CLAIMS

What I claim is:

1. A video processing method comprising the steps of:

in a first mode of operation:

receiving a digitized video stream;

compressing said video stream using a selected first compression algorithm;

recording the compressed video stream;

creating a record indicating that said recorded, compressed video stream was compressed using said first compression algorithm; and

storing said record; and

in a second mode of operation, different from said first mode:

retrieving said stored record; and

if the retrieved record indicates that said recorded, compressed video stream was compressed using said first compression algorithm:

reading the recorded, compressed video stream;

processing said recorded, compressed video stream using a selected video processing algorithm;

recording the processed, compressed video stream;

modifying said record to indicate that said recorded, re-compressed video stream was processed using said selected video processing algorithm; and

storing said modified record.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said first mode of operation comprises on-line operation in real time.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein said second mode of operation comprises off-line operation in non-real time.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein:

said step of processing said recorded, compressed video stream is further characterized as:

re-compressing said recorded, compressed video stream using a selected second compression algorithm;

said step of recording the processed, compressed video stream is further characterized as:

recording the re-compressed video stream; and

said step of modifying said record is further characterized as:

modifying said record to indicate that said recorded, re-compressed video stream was re-compressed using said second compression algorithm.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein:

said step of processing said recorded, compressed video stream is further characterized as:

enhancing said recorded, compressed video stream using a selected enhancement algorithm;

said step of recording the processed, compressed video stream is further characterized as:

recording the enhanced, compressed video stream; and

said step of modifying said record is further characterized as:

modifying said record to indicate that said recorded, compressed video stream was enhanced using said selected enhancement algorithm.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein:

said step of processing said recorded, compressed video stream is further characterized as:

processing said recorded, compressed video stream using a selected enhancement algorithm and a selected second compression algorithm;

said step of recording the processed, compressed video stream is further characterized as:

recording the enhanced, re-compressed video stream; and

said step of modifying said record is further characterized as:

modifying said record to indicate that said recorded, enhanced, re-compressed video stream was processed using said selected enhancement algorithm and said selected second compression algorithm.

7. A video processing method comprising the steps of:

in a first mode of operation:

receiving a digitized video stream;

compressing said video stream using a selected compression algorithm;

recording the compressed video stream;

creating a record indicating that said recorded, compressed video stream was compressed using said selected compression algorithm; and

storing said record; and

in a second mode of operation, different from said first mode:

retrieving said stored record; and

if the retrieved record indicates that said recorded, compressed video stream was compressed using said first compression algorithm:

reading the recorded, compressed video stream;

re-compressing said recorded, compressed video stream using a selected second compression algorithm;

recording the re-compressed video stream;

modifying said record to indicate that said recorded, re-compressed video stream was re-compressed using said second compression algorithm; and

storing said modified record.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein said first mode of operation comprises on-line operation in real time.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein said second mode of operation comprises off-line operation in non-real time.

10. A video processing method comprising the steps of:

in a first mode of operation:

receiving a digitized video stream;

compressing said video stream using a selected compression algorithm;

recording the compressed video stream;

creating a record indicating that said recorded, compressed video stream was compressed using said selected compression algorithm; and

storing said record; and

in a second mode of operation, different from said first mode:

retrieving said stored record; and

if the retrieved record indicates that said recorded, compressed video stream was compressed using said first compression algorithm:

reading the recorded, compressed video stream;

enhancing said recorded, compressed video stream using a selected enhancement algorithm;

recording the enhanced, compressed video stream;

modifying said record to indicate that said recorded, compressed video stream was enhanced using said selected enhancement algorithm; and

storing said modified record.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said first mode of operation comprises on-line operation in real time.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said second mode of operation comprises off-line operation in non-real time.

13. A video processing method comprising the steps of:

in a first mode of operation:

receiving a digitized video stream;

compressing said video stream using a selected first compression algorithm;

recording the compressed video stream;

creating a record indicating that said recorded, compressed video stream was compressed using said selected first compression algorithm; and

storing said record; and

in a second mode of operation, different from said first mode:

retrieving said stored record; and

if the retrieved record indicates that said recorded, compressed video stream was compressed using said first compression algorithm:

reading the recorded, compressed video stream;

processing said recorded, compressed video stream using a selected enhancement algorithm and a selected second compression algorithm;

recording the enhanced, re-compressed video stream;

modifying said record to indicate that said recorded, enhanced, re-compressed video stream was processed using said selected enhancement algorithm and said selected second compression algorithm; and

storing said modified record.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein said first mode of operation comprises on-line operation in real time.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein said second mode of operation comprises off-line operation in non-real time.

16. In a video processing method comprising the steps of:

in a first mode of operation:

receiving a digitized video stream;

compressing said video stream using a selected first compression algorithm;

recording the compressed video stream;

creating a record indicating that said recorded, compressed video stream was compressed using said first compression algorithm; and

storing said record;

the improvement comprising:

in a second mode of operation, different from said first mode:

retrieving said stored record; and

if the retrieved record indicates that said recorded, compressed video stream was compressed using said first compression algorithm:

reading the recorded, compressed video stream;

processing said recorded, compressed video stream using a selected video processing algorithm;

recording the processed, compressed video stream;

modifying said record to indicate that said recorded, re-compressed video stream was processed using said selected video processing algorithm; and

storing said modified record.

17. A video processing apparatus:

operative in a first mode of operation to:

receive a digitized video stream;

compress said video stream using a selected first compression algorithm;

record the compressed video stream;

create a record indicating that said recorded, compressed video stream was compressed using said first compression algorithm; and

store said record; and

operative in a second mode of operation, different from said first mode, to:

retrieve said stored record; and

if the retrieved record indicates that said recorded, compressed video stream was compressed using said first compression algorithm:

read the recorded, compressed video stream;

process said recorded, compressed video stream using a selected video processing algorithm;

record the processed, compressed video stream;

modify said record to indicate that said recorded, re-compressed video stream was processed using said selected video processing algorithm; and

store said modified record.

18. The apparatus of claim 17 wherein:

in processing said recorded, compressed video stream the apparatus re-compresses said recorded, compressed video stream using a selected second compression algorithm;

in recording the processed, compressed video stream the apparatus records the re-compressed video stream; and

in modifying said record the apparatus modifies said record to indicate that said recorded, re-compressed video stream was re-compressed using said second compression algorithm.

19. The apparatus of claim 17 wherein:

in processing said recorded, compressed video stream the apparatus enhances said recorded, compressed video stream using a selected enhancement algorithm;

in recording the processed, compressed video stream the apparatus records the enhanced, compressed video stream; and

in modifying said record the apparatus modifies said record to indicate that said recorded, enhanced, compressed video stream was enhanced using said selected enhancement algorithm.

20. The apparatus of claim 17 wherein:

in processing said recorded, compressed video stream the apparatus enhances said video stream using a selected enhancement algorithm, and re-compresses said enhanced video stream using a selected second compression algorithm;

in recording the processed, compressed video stream the apparatus records the enhanced, re-compressed video stream; and

in modifying said record the apparatus modifies said record to indicate that said recorded, enhanced, re-compressed video stream was enhanced using said selected enhancement algorithm and re-compressed using said selected second compression algorithm.

21. The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the apparatus is controlled by a digital computer operating in response to a sequence of instructions comprising a computer program.